

## Species Spotlight

**A brief guide to pet gerbils, hedgehogs, pot-bellied pigs, skunks, flying squirrels, ground squirrels and short-tailed opossums.**

*By Marylou Zarbock*

A bit of a loner that's active at night, that's the short-tailed opossum (*Monodelphis domestica*). These small, furry mammals originated from South America, live in trees, have a prehensile tail and are quite small, about the size of a Syrian hamster. Short-tailed opossums (STO) live about four years in captivity. They entered the pet trade in the early 1990s.

"I enjoy short-tailed opossums so much because they are fun to play with outside of the cage and fascinating to watch inside the cage," said Molly Kalafut of Colorado. "My opossums have enjoyed sleeping in a pouch around my neck and running around the house in a hamster ball. It is also fun to watch them climb around their cage, hunt for crickets, find a warm place to nap and to run in their exercise wheel."

For the full article, pick up the 2010 issue of *Critters USA* or [click here](#) to buy the issue.